



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS— LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR WATER!

**Objective:** To help children identify water pollutants, their sources, and their effects on the environment.

**Subject Areas:** Science, Art, Music

**Materials:**

- construction paper
- container, preferably a large glass jar, filled with water
- crayons
- finger paint
- "pollutants"—gum wrappers, oil (for cooking), toy tires, cans, soaps, bottle caps, chemicals (symbols)
- tapes or records—lively music and somber music

**Procedure:**

**Introduction**

Survey your children's knowledge of water. **Ask:** *What do we use water for?* (drinking, cooking, cleaning, industrial uses) *Where does the water we use come from?* (faucets, lakes, rivers, reservoirs) *Have you ever seen a reservoir? Water tower? What does it look like? What is it used for?* **For older or more capable children. Say:** *Have you ever been told not to drink water at home? Elsewhere? Have you ever drunk water that had a peculiar taste? Tell us about it.*

**Activities**

1. Now that you have your group's attention, introduce them to some items that can harm our water. Put the large container where children can see it. **Say:** *Think about a visit you've made to a river, stream, or lake. What did you see in the water that didn't belong in it?* As the children name the pollutants, put them in the water. Afterwards have the children describe the polluted water. **Ask:** *How might you feel if you had to drink or bathe in that water? What do you think might happen if you did?* Make it clear that using polluted water can seriously harm people's health.

2. Initiate a sensitivity exercise. Have your children pretend that they are healthy water life—fish, crabs, snails in clear, fresh water. Have the children "swim" to lively music. Next, have your children take on the characteristics of water life in polluted water. Have them flounder helplessly to somber music.

**Follow-up:**

You might wrap up this pollution exercise by having children express artistically what they've learned. Have the children cover one side of construction paper with blue finger paint. Use black paint to make a line down the middle of the paper. Label one half of the paper "Clean" and the other half "Dirty". Have students draw healthy water life on the clean side and unhealthy water life on the other. Children might add pollutants to the "Dirty" side as they learn of new ones. Display the children's artwork or have them use it as one page in a Woodsy Owl pollution booklet of their own making.

